

Developing a SMART Goal

SMART goals are:

S = Specific

M = Measurable

A = Attainable

R = Relevant, Rigorous, Realistic, and Results Focused

T = Timely and Trackable

Learning how to frame goals as SMART goals and being willing to adjust them to get SMARTer is an important skill that would help every student get off to a better start and have a better school year, this year and into the future.

Here is a practical example, starting with a typical, but not especially SMART, goal:

I will do better on my report card in the next marking period.

Here is a way to make it SMARTer:

In the next marking period, I will get at least a C on all my math tests, and at least a B on most of my quizzes and homework assignments.

But it's not SMART yet because it has no action plan or benchmarks. Here is a pretty SMART goal:

In the next marking period, I will take careful notes and review them at least two days before tests and quizzes so that I can ask the teacher questions about what I don't understand. I will do my math homework before I do things with friends, and when I hand it in, I will ask the teacher about anything I am not sure about. When I get anything wrong, I will make sure to ask the teacher, or one of my classmates how they got the right answer.

It's not easy to write SMART goals. This skill takes time to develop, and it's especially important to have in place for students at the secondary level. **A goal is an outcome, something that will make a difference as a result of achieving it.** It can't be too ambitious to be out of reach, but also not so simple that it does not challenge. A goal has to be realistic with a stretch, requiring effort and focus to achieve it. That's why goals need timeframes and measurable action steps along the way so that we can keep track of progress and make adjustments as necessary.